



PALM Expert

Podcasting is creating quite a buzz among radio listeners, but how can Palm users tap into its potential?

Julian Prokaza explains how a Palm-based reader can help you listen to broadcasts in a whole new way



MICROSOFT OS A STRONG POSSIBILITY

Comments from Palm CFO Andrew Brown in a recent interview suggest that a Palm running Windows Mobile can't be ruled out. Talking to technology website CNet, Brown said: "[People] don't get fired for using Microsoft products." Brown wouldn't say whether or not a Windows-powered Palm was planned. However, he added: "the fact is we are Switzerland, whether it be over the email server or the OS."

Events took a more interesting turn when images and video clips of the new Treo 670 appeared online. These showed a familiar Treo smartphone apparently running Windows Mobile, the Microsoft operating system for handhelds and smartphones. The story was given credence when the Chinese newspaper *Commercial Times* ran a story claiming that the Taiwan-based High Tech Computer will produce Palm's next-generation Treo smartphones in early 2006, including one using Microsoft's Windows Mobile operating system.

Both Palm and Microsoft are tight-lipped about any plans to work together. But given Palm's propensity for letting its secrets slip, if a Windows-powered Treo is in the works, we can expect to find pictures on the internet well before next year.

A MAP IN YOUR PALM

Google Maps has made its first appearance on the Palm OS. KMaps is a version of the service that runs on Palm Treo 600, 650 and Tungsten handhelds and it is completely free for personal use.

KMaps relies on Java for its operation. You can download a version for Palm OS from www.palm.com/us/support/jvm. Many of Google Maps' features are supported, including route planning, and maps can be cached for offline use. See www.alealea.com for more details.



Podcasts may seem like just the latest craze to sweep the web, but they are nothing short of a revolution in internet radio.

Podcasts are like normal internet radio shows, but they're designed to be downloaded and listened to offline, shifting the entertainment from your PC to a more convenient portable music player.

Podcasts started life as a way for independent broadcasters to get their shows heard as easily and as cheaply as possible, no matter how narrow their niche. Because of the phenomenal underground success of podcasting, however, commercial broadcasters are making podcasts. 'Podcatching' functionality is now even part of Apple's iTunes.

If you have a Palm-based handheld that is capable of MP3 playback, you can take advantage of podcasts, too.

LEARNING THE BASICS

Podcasting's basic premise is that by combining MP3 downloads with an RSS feed on a website, listeners can subscribe to shows and have them download automatically to their computer whenever new ones become available. If you have the right podcatching program, it's even possible to have downloads copied automatically to a portable music player when it's plugged into the PC, which is about as hassle-free as you can get.

Podcatching on a Palm handheld requires two things: MP3 playback capability and an RSS reader. You could subscribe to podcasts with a PC-based RSS reader, but you would then need to transfer the downloads to your Palm by hand. Using a Palm-

based reader makes the process wholly automatic, and that's what we're going to show you here.

This mini workshop uses an RSS news reader program called Quick News, which is available for download from http://standalone.com/palmos/quick_news. It costs \$15 (around £8), but a 30-day trial is available. Luckily, podcatching is built into the program.

1 Download the Quick News install file from http://standalone.com/palmos/quick_news and double-click it to start the installation. Perform a HotSync to transfer the program to your handheld, then start it from the Applications screen.

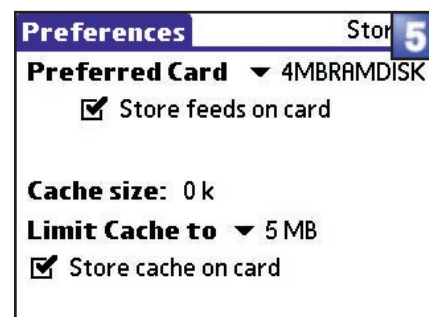
A short help screen appears when you start the program for the first time. This is worth a quick read so you can learn how to import the RSS feed list from any Windows news reader program you might already be using. If you don't want to import an existing feed list, just tap the Done button.

2 To add a feed, tap Edit Feed List, then the Add Feed button. You need to know the details of the podcast feed you want to add. Websites that offer podcasts usually advertise it clearly, but we'll use the podcast at www.1src.com as an example. The podcast link – 1SRC Podcast RSS Feed – is at the top right of the page.

3 Click the link and a page will open that won't make much sense in your web browser. Make a note of the URL, which



You've got no downloaded content display. You can either update your feeds now (to download new content) if you've got an internet connection on your Palm device, or edit your feeds, and selectively update one or more. If you don't have an internet connection, you'll need to perform a HotSync operation (and make sure the Quick News conduit is installed).
[Edit Feed List](#)





ends in .xml, and enter this as the URL on the Edit Feed screen opened on the handheld in Step 3. Choose a category or create a new one and give a name for the feed. You can choose any update frequency you like, but once a day should be sufficient for most podcasts. Tick the Auto-download recent Podcasts option, then tap Done.

4 The news feed appears in Quick News' Available Feed list. If your Palm can connect to the internet directly, you can update individual feeds by tapping the Sync icon at the left of each one. Otherwise, the feeds will be updated at each HotSync, according to the schedule set in Step 3. Tap Done when you have finished.

5 Podcasts can be several megabytes in size, so it's a good idea to store them on a memory card rather than in the main memory. Tap the QN icon on the QuickNews menu bar, then tap Options, Preferences. Tap the Storage option, then enable the Store feeds on card option and choose your memory card from the Preferred Card drop-down list. Tap Done, then Done again.

6 Perform a HotSync, and the news feed will be transferred to your Palm, along with the latest podcast. The MP3 file is stored in the \audio folder on the memory card and you can play it in the audio player of your choice; see our review of Pocket Tunes above right for one suggestion. If your handheld has internet access, you can skip the Auto-download podcast option (see Step 3) and just tap the header in each synchronised RSS feed, then tap Get Enclosure to download the podcast directly. 

CONTACT

PALM EXPERT

If there is anything you would like to see covered in *Palm Expert*, please contact us at the address below

palm@computershopper.co.uk

Edit Feed	
Category	▼ Palm
Name	1src podcast
URL	http://www.1src.com/podcasts/rss.xml
Frequency	▼ Once a Day
☒ Auto-download recent Podcasts	

QN	
1SRC Pod	Flag Article
1SRC Pod	Mark as Unread
Podcast archi	Copy Article
how going fir	Copy Link
help Alan Traf	Copy to Memo
Breaking News	Beam Article
discontinues t	Delete
Week's Editori	Email Article
Moto Q and w	

REVIEW AUDIO PLAYER

NORMSOFT Pocket Tunes 3.1

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$35 (around £20) for Deluxe version;

\$15 (around £8) for Basic version

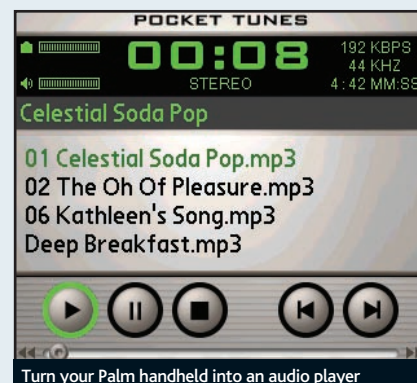
DETAILS www.pocket-tunes.com

You'll need an audio player program if you want to listen to podcasts with QuickNews. Luckily, there are a couple of good audio player programs for Palm OS handhelds. One of these is Pocket Tunes Deluxe, which has just been updated to version 3.1.

The program now supports DRM-protected audio as used by Rhapsody To Go, Napster To Go and Yahoo! Music Unlimited – in other words, any audio that is protected with Microsoft's Janus technology.

Pocket Tunes has all the audio playback tools you'd expect, including playlists, a surprisingly good equaliser, crossfading and bookmarks. It supports a wide range of audio formats, too, including MP3, PCM, WAV, WMA and Ogg Vorbis.

Getting audio on a Palm OS handheld can be fiddly, and it helps if you have a memory card reader on your PC. Pocket Tunes simplifies the process considerably. As long as you're happy to use Windows Media Player to manage your



music, Pocket Tunes lets you synchronise music to the handheld just as you would with any other MP3 player. The process is most seamless with Palm OS handhelds that support Microsoft's Media Transfer Protocol (mostly Palm Tungsten and Zire models), but synchronising is simple with other handhelds, too. If all else fails, you can still transfer files via a HotSync.

Pocket Tunes is a neat program that turns a Palm OS handheld into a capable audio player. Lack of AAC support is a minor complaint, as is the inability to control playback with the handheld's hardware buttons. At this price, though, the Basic version has everything you need to listen to podcasts.

REVIEW GAME

SMART BOX DESIGN Word Watch

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$15 (around £8)

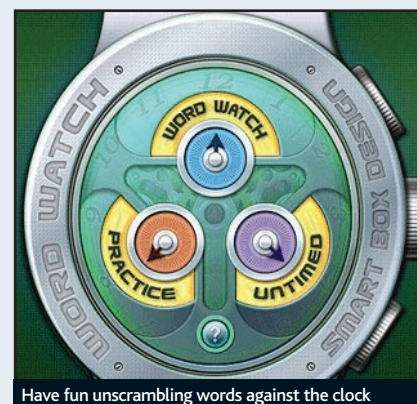
DETAILS www.smartboxdesign.com/wordwatch.html

Word games and handhelds are made for each other – they work well on any screen, they don't need lots of processing power and they are great for filling those short spells of free time that we all get from time to time. Word Watch is a perfect game for those spare moments. It's simple, addictive and perfect for playing in short bursts.

The game is a cross between Word Yahtzee and the Countdown Conundrum. Each round presents you with a jumbled word that you have to guess within a time limit. Words start with five letters, but get longer as the game progresses.

If you can't guess the word, you just make the longest word you can to move on to the next round, but any unused letters change to red letters and sit at the bottom of the screen. Get eight red letters and the game is over. However, there are bonus rounds that enable you to use the red letters to make other words and gain a new lease of life.

Practice and untimed modes let you get to grips with Word Watch before you dive into the timed game, but it doesn't take long to pick things up. The game's clean and simple



Have fun unscrambling words against the clock



Word Watch's interface is clean and easy to use

presentation helps make things easy, and you just need to tap away with the stylus to play.

The only caveat is that, being an American game, Word Watch uses US spellings, which might catch you out when the clock is ticking.